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## The Misconceptions of Negeri Sembilan Traditional Architecture

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### Abstract

Negeri Sembilan's unique identity is facing gradual disappearance endangering future generation's identity's ownership as well as cultural and built environment quality due to such misconception. This paper seeks to present the findings of a comprehensive literature reviews which then tested by a perception survey. The literature review is part of the research activities aimed in unravelling the authenticity of Negeri Sembilan traditional houses. The research methodology was qualitative. This research enables understanding of apparent misconception and an important milestone on an on-going research towards preserving the Negeri Sembilan socio-cultural identity for our future communities in facing environmental challenges.

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*Keywords:* Negeri Sembilan traditional architecture; misconception; identity ownership; future communities

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### 1. Introduction

This paper seeks to present the findings of a comprehensive literature reviews as part of the research activities in a two years research project aimed at determining the authenticity of the Negeri Sembilan traditional architecture. The research was proposed when the seriousness of misconceptions regarding the Negeri Sembilan architectural identity was realized at the Shanghai World Expo 2010. The Malaysia's identity for booth design at the expo was represented by Minangkabau identity, a community from the West Sumatra in Indonesia. A misconception emerged from misapprehension of the history of Southeast Asia. This paper is aimed at presenting those misconceptions based on the literature reviewed, clarified

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the facts and re-oriented the architectural meanings and symbols within the society in the local context, not meant to deny the Minangkabau influence that have evolved together within the local communities.

The Nara Document of Authenticity 1994, stated, heritage of all cultures and societies are rooted in the particular forms and means of tangible and intangible expression. Subsequently, our future communities' identity is undeniably reflected in our heritage, especially the built heritage, measured as a reflection of the community's socio-cultural identity. In the world that is increasingly subjected to globalization and homogenization, the essential contribution made by the consideration in authenticity according to Nara Document is to clarify and illuminate the collective memory of humanity. Authenticity judgements, nonetheless also depended on the nature of the cultural heritage and its cultural context which had evolved through time. Placing the Negeri Sembilan context the prevalence of their architectural is dependent on the degree of understanding of both communities' historical relationship. Within a scope of a single paper it is not possible to describe in detail the historical relationship between Negeri Sembilan and Minangkabau communities. Contextual understanding of the history and location however is vital in order to comprehend this paper. For further understanding see Masri et. al (2012a).

Authenticity in the context of Negeri Sembilan is a complex mixture of two cultures, the Minangkabau and the Biduanda (Jakun), evolved through time and the key to it is finding cultural significance embodied in the communities' known uniqueness. Determining authenticity, in this context is a path that needed to be treaded carefully. A question of identity as Fielden pointed, is an emotional subject to any individuals and community (Fielden, 1994).

## 2. Brief Introduction to Negeri Sembilan

Negeri Sembilan is a state in Malaysia located on the central west coast on the Malay Peninsula popularly known for their historical associations with the Minangkabau Kingdom. Refer to Figure 1(a), 1(b) and 2. Masri et. al (2012a) discusses in detail of the origins, ancestral link, royal bloodlines link as well as the geographical link. Figure 1(a) and (b) shows Negeri Sembilan, the confederate minor states became known only in 1773 A.D. (Gullick, 2003; Adil, 1981). The traditional district (*luak*), refer to Gullick (2003). Figure 4 and 5 is an overview of the historical settings meant to assist the reader.

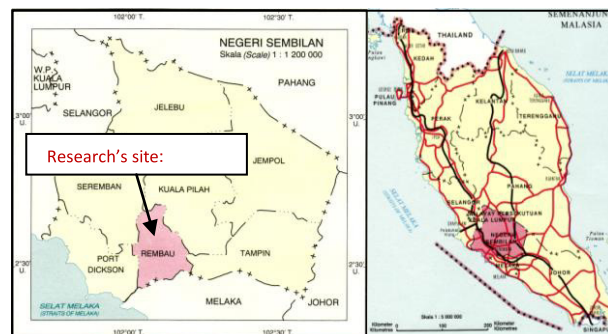


Fig. 1. (a) Location of Rembau; (b) Location of Negeri Sembilan in Malaysia  
(Source: JUPEM, 2006)

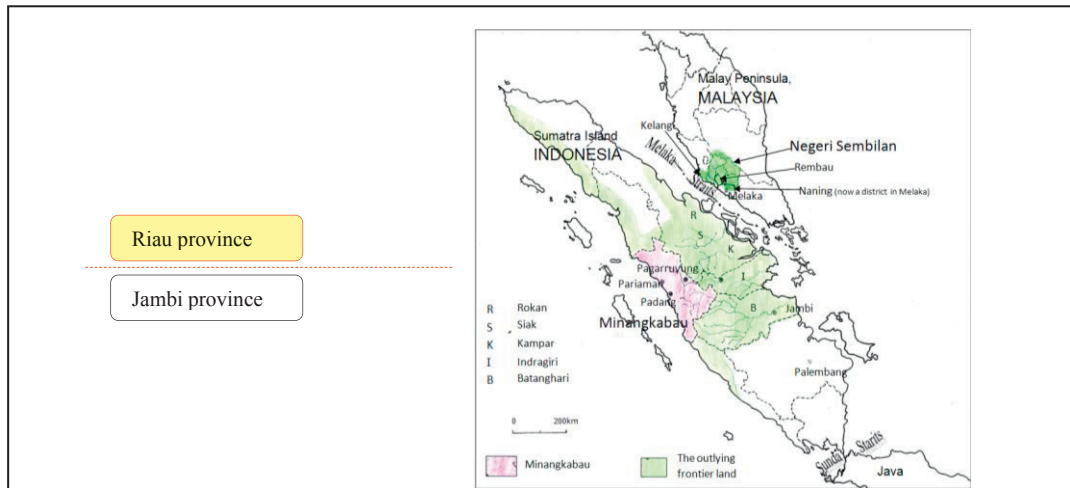


Fig. 2. Shows the extent of Minangkabau kingdoms at its peak where Negeri Sembilan was part of their outlying frontier

(Source: Adopted from Masri et. al. 2012; Loeb, Kato and Asri)

### 2.1. Negeri Sembilan's ruling system

*Adat Perpatih* is name given to the present matrilineal practices in Negeri Sembilan. The name believed to be originated from Minangkabau (Gullick, 2003; Ahmat, 2010) through the Minangkabau communities that settled there and spread through intermarriages with the local communities (Idrus, 1996). The communities in Negeri Sembilan consist of 12 clans (*suku*). Ideally there were 12 clans but today there are twenty-seven clans with 20 Lembaga (clan-chief) now (Ibrahim, 1988). The Biduanda clan is the original settlers or the local aborigines in Negeri Sembilan (Ibrahim, 1988; Gullick, 2003; Adil, 1981). Refer also to Table 1. Therefore only the male descendents from the female bloodline of the Biduanda clan can be appointed to be the Undang as in Fig. 3.

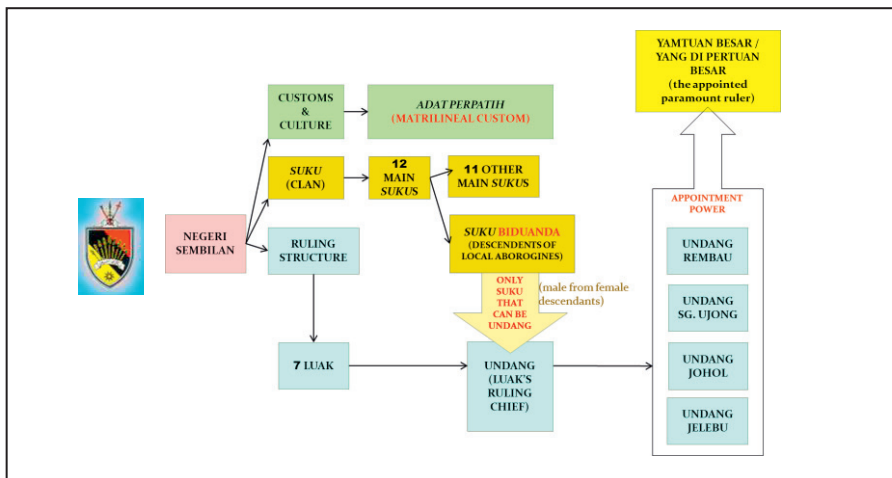


Fig. 3. Illustrate Negeri Sembilan's uniqueness: their customs, clans and ruling structure

(Source: Author Masri)

Figure 4 emphasis the notable significant of the regions had been under the sovereignty of the Melayu-Jambi and Sriwijaya for almost ten centuries.

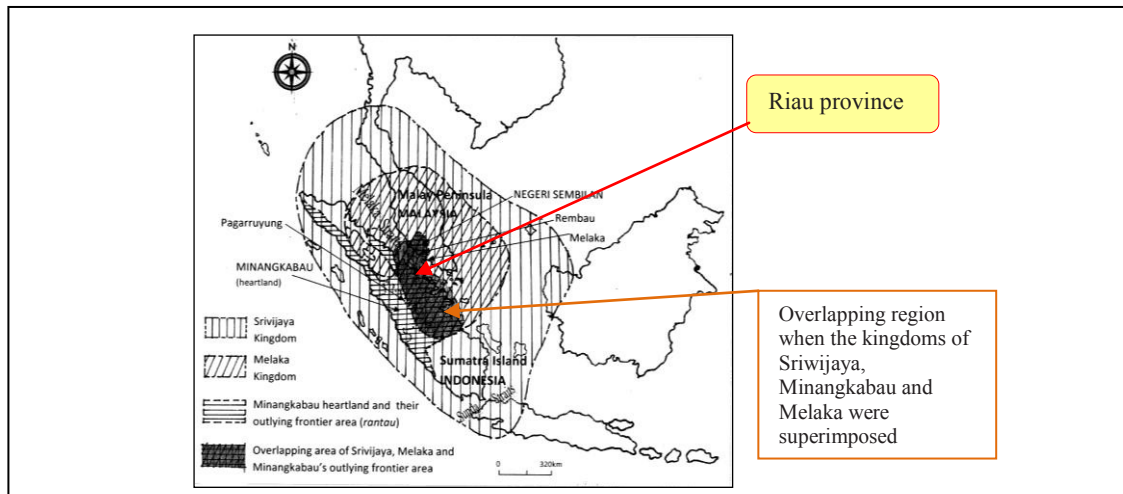


Fig. 4. Map showing the overlapping area that was common to the Sriwijaya Kingdom, Melaka Kingdom and Minangkabau Kingdom

(Source: Adopted from Leob, Kato and Asri)

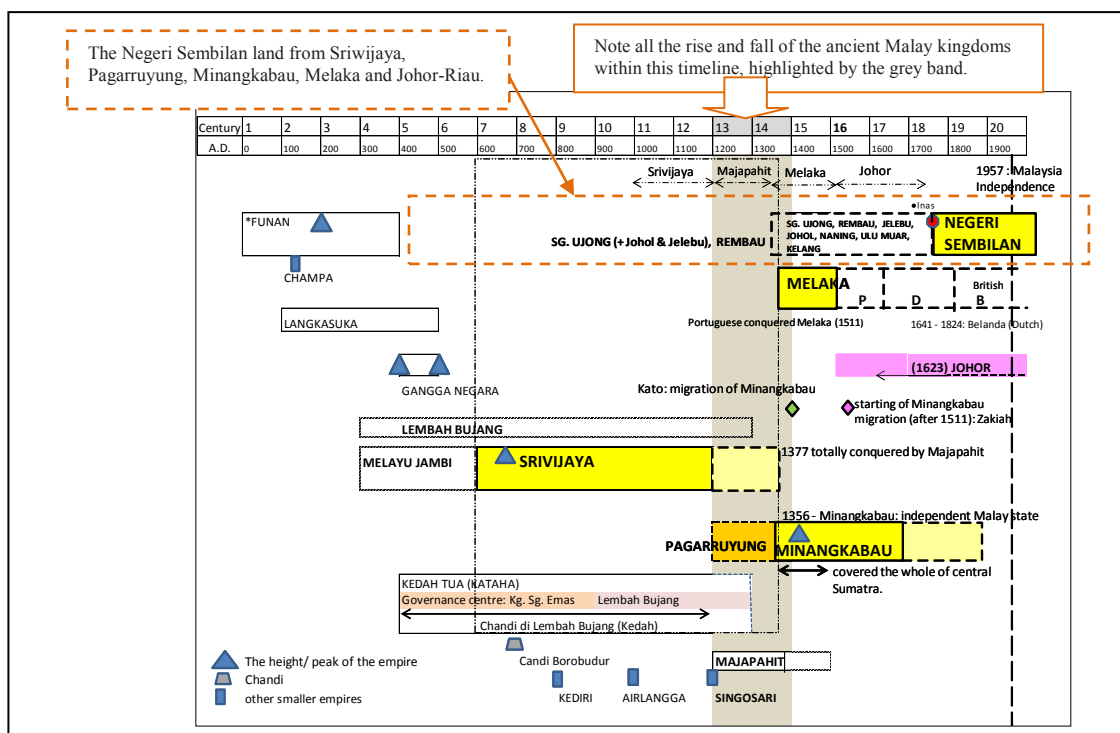


Fig. 5. Timeline of the ancient Malay empires, Kingdoms and Sultanate from 1<sup>st</sup> Century to 19<sup>th</sup> Century

(Source: Author, Masri – adopted from Masri et. al, 2012)

### 3. Research Background

#### 3.1. Research methodology

The overall research methodology is qualitative. The methodology of the research is divided into five phases. The literature reviews are executed at Phase 2, the primary and secondary data search phase. The literature review of the secondary data is again divided into five categories. History of Southeast Asia Malay Kingdoms, history of the Malay Peninsula (specifically on the history of Negeri Sembilan, Melaka and Johor), Malay Traditional Architecture, Minangkabau traditional architecture and the customs ('Adat Perpatih' and 'Adat Minangkabau'). Figure 6 shows in detail the methodology within Phase 2 which lead to this paper. The survey result was expected to make the conclusion of this paper more robust.

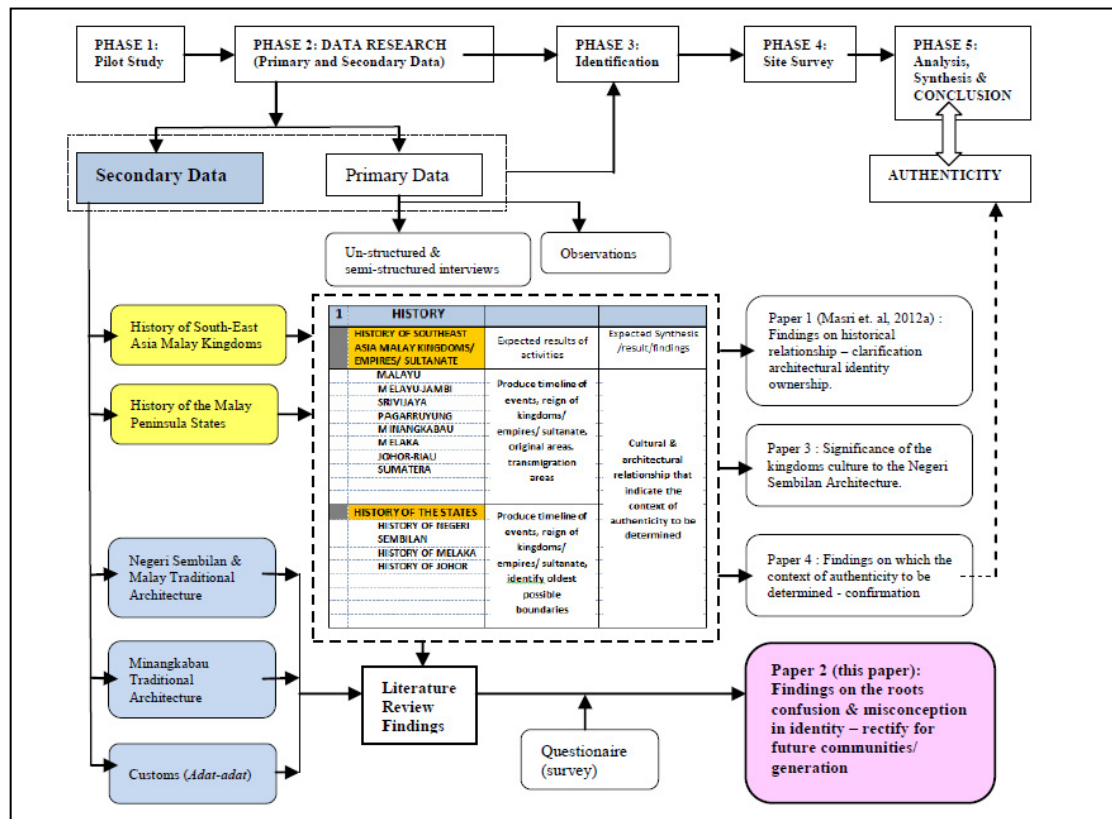


Fig.6. The methods in the literature review  
(Source: Author Masri)

#### 3.2. Research limitations

The grant scheme only funded research activities with sites only within Malaysia. Comparison with any information gathered about another countries were only through content analysis of the secondary data gathered, the literatures. The findings would be more robust if the study of the Minangkabau

traditional architecture could be executed in the Central Western Sumatra (the Minangkabau historical heartland).

### 3.3. Research site

Rembau was chosen because historically it is the principle of all the luak, the *Tanah Mengandung* (the land honoured as the royal territory) before Kuala Pilah and many significant historically events of Negeri Sembilan occurred in Rembau. The significance of choice of site should be referred to Masri et. al.(2012a). Refer also to Figure 1(a) and 1(b).

## 4. Literature Review Findings

The review revealed the existence of misconceptions concerning the Negeri Sembilan identity, mostly in the interpretation of the association with Minangkabau.

### 4.1. Emergence of the misconceptions

The roots of the emergence of the misconception from the historical events related to Negeri Sembilan and Minangkabau Kingdom, may be summarized as in Table 1 based on the review of literature presented in the preceding paper, Masri et. al, 2012a. It should be stressed that these events had indirectly yield certain mistaken believe, not only in the architectural identity but also in their cultures and lifestyle.

Table 1. The significant historically event that yielded misconception about Negeri Sembilan communities

	Historical events (from Masri et. al, 2012a)	Yielded Misconception
i	The influential two major transmigration waves of the Minangkabaus to Rembau in Negeri Sembilan around 1400 A.D. (Kato, 1997). The first major transmigration waves settled in the Southern part (Lower) of Rembau whereas the second waves to the Northern part (Upper) of Rembau (Ibrahim, 1988).	The Malays of Negeri Sembilan originated from the Minangkabau heartland in Central West Sumatra. They were the people who opened the settlements in Rembau subsequently other minor states.
ii	From Masri et. al (2012a): Historically Rembau was acknowledged in the literatures as the principle luaks of the nine minor states in Negeri Sembilan by Gullick through the records by Newbold in 1839, R.O. Winstedt in the Dutch's Dagregister (Ibrahim, 1988; Gullick, 2003; Ali, 1953 cited in Idrus, 1996). In the treaty on 11 November 1759, the representative from Rembau was decribed as 'the heads of the nine countries of Rembau' (Gullick, 2003). D'Eredia in 1613 Dagregister wrote, 'Rombo, the head of the Malayo villages in a territory which belongs to the Crown of Johor ... is peopled by Monancabos' (de Jong, 1975).	Implies that all of the Malays of Negeri Sembilan are the Minangkabau people from Central West Sumatra.
iii	The installation of Raja Melewar from Pagarruyung Royals in Minangkabau as the Paramount Appointed Ruler (Yang DiPertuan Besar or Yamtuan Besar) in Negeri Sembilan in 1773 A.D.	Most communities would appoint their ruler from their own people. Appointing a Minangkabau Royals as the Yamtuan to most people implied that the people in Negeri Sembilan originated from Minangkabau.

- |    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| iv | The intermarriages of the Minangkabau leaders and royals to the daughters of leaders of the aborigines of Negeri Sembilan (Jakun or Sakai: Biduanda clan) that led to the assimilation of the matrilineal customs from both communities now known as the 'Adat Perpatih' in Negeri Sembilan.  | The Minangkabau people were the ones that brought the matrilineal customs to Negeri Sembilan. It was not rooted from Negeri Sembilan land.  |
| v  | The dynamism of the maritime culture of the ancient Malay Kingdoms of the Insular Southeast Asia (Kato, 1997), especially within and around the Melaka Straits.   | The old Negeri Sembilan territories (all the minor states) were part of the Minangkabau outlying frontier area. Therefore the culture, customs, lifestyle and architecture is the same as in the Minangkabau heartland. |
| vi | The becoming of Pagarruyung Kingdom as an independent Malay state from the weakening of Sriwijaya Kingdom and the invasion by Majapahit Kingdom, through a buffalo fight which gave them the name 'Minangkabau' replacing 'Pagarruyung' becoming known as Minangkabau Kingdom (Loeb, 1989). The event was reflected in the visual analogy of shape of the roof of their houses, the shape of the 'buffalo horns'. | Based on (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv), thus the visual analogy of the shape of the Negeri Sembilan houses was and is presumed to be the same, from the shape of the 'buffalo horns'.                                       |

Nonetheless this paper's emphasis is towards the traditional architecture of Negeri Sembilan. Thus, the related misconceptions identified for discussion is as listed in Table 2.

Table 2. List of misconceptions that have significance effects to the misconception of the Negeri Sembilan architectural identity

	Description	Consequence from the misconception
Misconception 1	The Malays of Negeri Sembilan originated from the Minangkabau heartland in Central West Sumatra.	This belief make most people believe that both communities identities including architectural is the same, from the aspect of philosophy, representation and analogy in design.
Misconception 2	The Minangkabau people were the ones that brought the matrilineal customs to Negeri Sembilan. It was not rooted from Negeri Sembilan land.	This belief caused people to perceive that the Minangkabau people matrilineal practices is also called <i>Adat Perpatih</i> . Hence the socio-cultural influence on the interior layout of both communities' houses is the same.
Misconception 3	The upward curve of the Negeri Sembilan roof is the visual analogy of the buffalo horns.	This belief originated from Misconception 1.
Misconception 4	The Interior spatial layout of Negeri Sembilan Traditional houses is the same as the interior layout of Minangkabau traditional houses	This belief originated from Misconception 1 and 2.

The establishment of the Misconceptions 3 to Misconception 4 in Table 2, is embedded from the first two misconceptions. Hence the following chapters highlight the literatures in order to resolve the misconceptions.



#### 4.2. Misconception 1: “The Malays of Negeri Sembilan originated from the Minangkabau heartland.”

This statement implies that all the existing Malay communities or clans in Negeri Sembilan came from the Minangkabau heartland, Western Sumatra, Indonesia, also as if no local communities exist before the Minangkabau Malays transmigrated.

The history books such as written by Gullick, Adil and Khoo clearly stated who the aborigines were in Negeri Sembilan even highlighted their existence during the Sriwijaya Kingdoms sovereignty. Astonishingly, on the other hand some of the architectural books written could mislead to readers as to indirectly causing misconception as presented in Table 1, 2 and 3.

Table 3. Example some of the written materials from architectural books

Author/ Book Title	Page no.	Quotations that could mislead and misconceptions
Nasir, 1985	6	<p><i>“Di Negeri Sembilan di mana orang-orang Melayunya berasal dari Minangkabau telah memperlihatkan bentuk dan gaya rumahnya sangat dipengaruhi oleh senibina dari mana asal keturunan mereka.”</i></p> <p>Translation 1: “The Malay people in Negeri Sembilan originated from Minangkabau had portrayed their house form and style that is very much influenced by the architecture of their origin’s homeland.”</p>
The Encyclopedia of Malaysia: Architecture	17	<p>“The roof style of the Minangkabau-style Negeri Sembilan house (5) is believed to be influenced by the Sumatran house from Indonesia (6). <u>The ancestors of the people in Negeri Sembilan came from the Minangkabau region.</u>”</p> <p><i>Note: (5) and (6) in the sentence refers to the diagram in discussion.</i></p>
The Encyclopedia of Malaysia: Architecture	24	<p>“The Negeri Sembilan roof is a visual analogy of a <u>bull’s head and horns, purportedly honouring the buffalo for the role it played in winning an important battle in Sumatra.</u>”</p>

Gullick writing proves the existence of local Negeri Sembilan Malays before the Minangkabau people transmigrated, figured prominently in the Malay legends of their pioneer settlements and the whole area of Naning-Rembau had been occupied by ‘aborigines only’ when the Portuguese first arrived. Adil’s statement further proves the misconception by emphasizing the aborigines of Rembau was unmistakably the Jakun communities, known as the Biduanda or Mantera people (Adil, 1981). Sungai Ujong was known to be under the sovereignty of the Sriwijaya Kingdom during the 11<sup>th</sup> Century (Adil, 1981).

#### 4.3. Misconception 2: “The Minangkabau people were the ones that brought the matrilineal customs to Negeri Sembilan.”

With reference to Table 1, Misconception 2 was rooted from the historical event (iv), the integration of the Minangkabau clan or group into the Jakun community (Biduanda clan). Bear in mind, any new settlements may only be opened with the permission of Jakun community’s chief (called *Tok Batin*). Although there were no records found about new settlements in Jelevu but there were records of two such marriages took place in Jelevu. Table 5 and 6 shows that there is a remarkable degree of consistency between the new settlements opened by the Minangkabau people and the intermarriages with the Biduanda clan’s daughter. Thus, resulted the misconception 2. Table 5 and 6 are just to illustrate the source of misconception 2.



The ease into which the Jakun communities accepted the marriage between the Minangkabau clan or group's leaders and their chief's daughter was a fact that should be brought forth and provoked people to rethink or re-evaluate their believe as misconception 2 above. Adil and Idrus, on the other hand, confirmed otherwise as demonstrated in Table 4.

Table 4. Comparison table of the Jakun and Minangkabau communities at the time of the major trans migrations

Communities/ people	JAKUN/SAKAI/BIDUANDA	MINANGKABAU
Custom	Matrilineal	Matrilineal
Name given to the custom	None [Note: Adat Perpatih name was given to the customs after the assimilation of both communities' culture and custom through intermarriages when the Jakun became muslims ]	Adat Minangkabau divided into 2 type ( <i>laras</i> ) (Idrus, 1996, p. 17): Laras Koto-Piliang (lead by Datuk Perpatih nan Sabatang) Laras Bodi-Caniago (lead by Datuk Katamanggungan)
Religion/ believe	Nature's spirit (Semangat Alam)	Islam
Clans	Did not practice division of groups within communities through clans	Practicing division of groups within communities through clans (suku).
Leaders	The district or minor states leaders were called Tok Batin.	The clan leaders were given titles.
Female Leaders	There were females community's leaders appointed. (Example: Batin Bercanggai Besi = female.)	Clan leaders are men from the female lineage.

Table 5. Recorded new settlements opened in the minor states of Negeri Sembilan

Present State	NEGERI SEMBILAN										MELAKA	S'GOR	JOHOR	PAHANG	
present <i>Luak</i>	SEREMBAN	PORT DICKSON	JELEBU	REMBAU	TAMPIN	JEMPOL		KUALA PILAH (Seri Menanti; Terachi; G. Pasir)		NANING	KELANG	SEGAMAT	ULU PAHANG		
Traditional ( <i>Luak</i> )	*Sg. Ujong		Jelebu	*Rembau	Tampin	Johol	Air Keruh	Gemen cheh	Ulu Muar	Inas	Naning	Klang	Segamat	Ulu Pahang	Jelai
opened by the people from															
MINANGKABAU	m			v	v	v			Biduanda + v	v	m				
Name of village				(1) Kg. Kota, (2)Kg. Padang Lekuk, (3)Kg. Selemak	Repah	Tampin			Gemencheh	Kg. Tengah					
Suku's name				(1) & (2)Paya Bidara; (3)Selemak/ Seri Lemak, Batu Hampar, Semelenggang & Tanah Datar.	Batu Tiga	Batu Hampar			not stated	not stated					
home village				not stated	not stated	not stated			not stated	not stated					
MELAKA					v										
Name of village					Keru & Tebong										
Suku's name					Mungkal										
home village					Mancap										

m = recorded peopled by Minangkabaus (Adil, 1981)  
\* = greatest concentration (Gullick, 2003)

Table 6. Intermarriages of the Biduanda clan leaders' daughter with the Minangkabau clan leaders

Present State	NEGERI SEMBILAN										MELAKA	SELANGOR	JOHOR	PAHANG
present <i>Luak</i>	SEREMBAN	PORT DICKSON	JELEBU	REMBAU	TAMPIN	JEMPOL				KUALA PILAH (Seri Menanti; Terachi; G. Pasir)	NANING	KELANG	SEGAMAT	ULU PAHANG
Traditional ( <i>Luak</i> )	Sg. Ujong		Jelebu	Rembau	Tampin	Johol	Air Keruh	Gemencheh	Ulu Muar	Inas	Naning	Klang	Segamat	Ulu Pahang
opened by the people from														
Johor Sultanate's Bloodline	√													
Minangkabau's Royal Bloodline					√				√ RM					
Pagaruyung (Minangkabau heartland) residence (not stated whether from royal bloodline)			√											
Minangkabau's Malay	√		√	√√						√				
Ruler from Royal Minangkabau Bloodline				√	√									
NOTE: THE MARRIAGE IS TO THE LADY OR DAUGHTER OF THE LEADERS AS THEIR CUSTOM IS MATRILINEAL										RM = Raja Melewar				
BOLD LUAK'S NAME: AMONG THE OLD TRADITIONAL MAIN LUAK.														

(Sources: Adil, 1981; Gullick, 2003)

#### 4.4. Misconception 3: “The slight upward curves (*lentik*) on both ends of the Negeri Sembilan traditional house, is the visual analogy of the buffalo horns”

Buffalo horns (*Tanduk Kerbau*) is the visual analogy of the Minangkabau traditional house's roof shape, allegedly honouring the buffalo's role in winning the battle for the Pagarruyung kingdom against the Majapahit kingdom in Sumatra. Idrus research however proved differently. According to him it is the visual representation from the shape of '*Kajang Perahu*' (Idrus, 1996). *Perahu* is the name given to a type of a Malay boat. *Kajang* means the roof of the back of the *perahu* made from the nipah leaves (DBP, 2012). An unexpected revelation, yet, undeniably fit within the maritime culture of the ancient Malays. Furthermore early nineteenth century researchers was found by Waterson to have already concluded and acknowledged the significance of ships (and boats) to people in the South-East Asia's architecture. Waterson wrote that Vroklage (based on his research in 1934) concluded that the curve roofs with their pointed ends symbolized the boats of the bearer's culture. Vroklage named the curve roof as 'ship roof' as in his point of view, better signifies the 'true' meaning (Waterson, 2009). Waterson may be of a contrasting opinion to Vroklage but to a Malay origin researcher, the connection seemed logical. Curiously European origin researchers' commonly referred to the Malay houses curve roof as the 'saddle-back' roof (Waterson, 2009; Oliver, 2006).

Referring to Figure 4, Negeri Sembilan was under the sovereignty of Sriwijaya, at its peak, the supreme (*terulung*) maritime empire in the Southeast Asia history for about six and a half century. (Masri et. al. 2012; Yew et. al. 2008). Remarkably, even the Chinese in the I-Tsing records acknowledged the Sriwijaya ports as being able to produce large ships (Yew et. al, 2008). The special connections between Negeri Sembilan and Minangkabau, had caused many research centred more on the Minangkabau association, thus overlooked the Negeri Sembilan association with Siak, a district within the mainland Riau in the Eastern Sumatra. Refer to Figure 4 and Figure 2. Notably the *Lontik* roof of Riau is the visual representation of the *Lancang* (traditional boat) (Idrus, 1996; Nurdiani, 2005). The manifestation of their cultural pride, were not only in the roof forms, but also to the external ornamentations and decorative elements of the house.

#### 4.5. The roof shape

It is rather peculiar that the Negeri Sembilan house to be called the Minangkabau house when there are obvious differences especially in the shape and form of the roof. Figure 7(a) is the sketch of a typical long roof traditional house in Negeri Sembilan whereas Figure 7(b) is a sketch of a Minangkabau traditional house in West Sumatra.

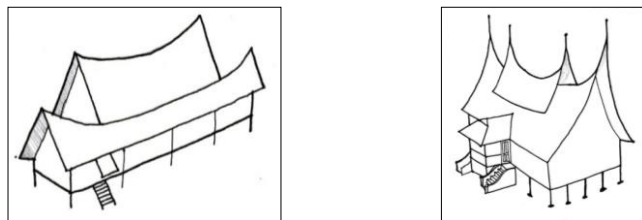


Fig. 7. (a) sketch of a typical Negeri Sembilan Traditional House, Malaysia; (b) sketch of a Minangkabau traditional house in West Sumatra

The proportion of Figure 7(a) looked longer and slimmer compared to Figure 7(b), which reflect the space that the roof housed. However the discussion concerning the roof form in relation to the interior spaces refer to chapter 4.6. The entrance into the house will not discuss here as that is related to the type of customs and owner's rank in the society, not the scope of discussion in this paper.

Both are characterized by the gabled-end long roof type of the Malay traditional house and by an upward curve at both of the gable ends. Both seems to have two layers of roof but built above different interior spaces. There are obvious differences within the similarities stated in their characteristics. Firstly is in the manner in which the upward curve is built at both of the gable ends. Secondly in the way the second roof is built.

In order to differentiate the manner of the upward curves it is best to use the sketch of the elevations. Refer to Figure 8(a) and 8(b).

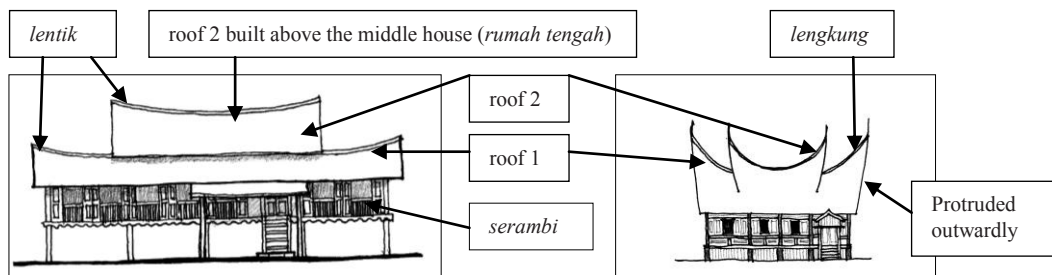


Fig. 8. (a) Elevation of Negeri Sembilan traditional house; (b) Elevation Minangkabau traditional house

In Figure 5(a), at both gable ends of the roofs (roof 1 and roof 2), the ridge line are built with slight upward curves (*lentik*) without the outward protrusion. On the other end, in Figure 5(b), the angle of the upwards curves rose steeper and more curvatures, describe by the Malay word *lengkung*. The finial for Minangkabau roof (named *Gonjong*) on the other hand seems to bend inwardly. As the gable ends' ridge line curvature rise upwards, the roof protruded outwardly.

The second characteristic to observe, with reference to Figure 5(a) and (b), is in how roof 1 and roof 2 are built, arranged and placed above the interior spaces. The Negeri Sembilan traditional house roofs are built usually above the interior space name the "middle house" (*rumah tengah*) or "mother house" consist of an attic above it and separately above the foremost space from the entrance named *serambi*. The *rumah tengah* due to the attic consist of two levels spaces whereas the *serambi* which also functions as the reception area, is just one level in height. Therefore, roof 1 and roof 2 as shown in Figure 7(a) and 8(a) are at two different storey levels (*bertingkat*). Refer to Figure 9. In contrast to the Minangkabau traditional house, the roofs are built in layers (*berlapis*), roof 2 constructed on top of roof 1 forming another layer above roof 1.

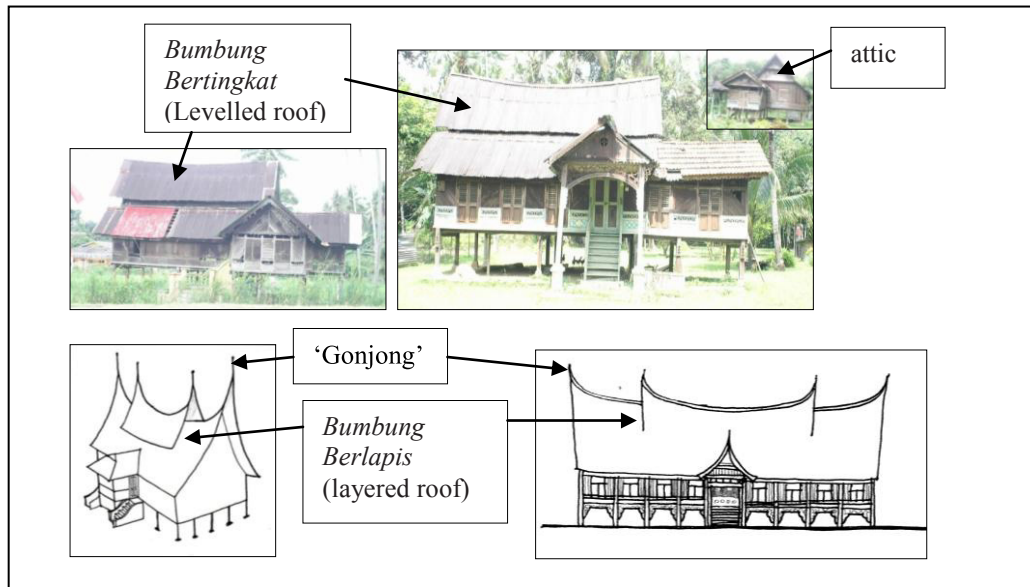


Fig. 9. Showing the difference between 2-level roof/ levelled roof (*bumbung bertingkat*) of the Negeri Sembilan traditional house and the layered roof (*bumbung berlapis*) of Minangkabau traditional house

#### 4.6. Misconception 4: The interior spatial layout of Negeri Sembilan Traditional House is the same as the Minangkabau Traditional House interior spatial layout

Although the Negeri Sembilan traditional houses are commonly differentiated on the basis of the number of columns or stilts the house is built on, but for the purpose of discussion in this paper uses the typical floor plan layout. The basic interior spaces for a typical Negeri Sembilan traditional house are as shown in Figure 10(a). The attic (*peran/loteng*) located above the middle house is another characteristic of the house. Each of these spaces is defined using walls and floor levels differentiation. Additional spaces or extension of the spaces in some houses are added and these additional spaces, such as *pangkal serambi* and *anjung* (the *serambi* space is extended to the front at the *Rumah Tangga*), indirectly signify the owner's status in the community. The *lentik* roof in Figure 8(a) and 7(a) is built on top of the *serambi* and the middle house, including the room and attic. The entrances into the house are usually three, one at the front into the *serambi* (for the men guests), the other is at the side into the *selang* (women guest entrance) and the third is through the open platform and the cooking area.

As for the Minangkabau traditional houses, in addition to using the number of columns in categorizing houses, used the division of spaces created by the arrays of the columns. Refer to Figure 11(a), 11(b). The important point to note here is that the whole of the interior spaces layout is within one large space covered by a single roof construction built in layers. The number of layers built signifies importance. All the rooms (including the kitchen) are located at the back and divided by interior walls or partition. Widya (2005) implied that floor levels are used to define the spaces. Interestingly, there is only one way in and out. According to Idrus (1996) entrance location is determined by the custom type (*laras*) the family practices as explain in Figure 11 and 13. K-P houses have all rooms on the same floor levels.

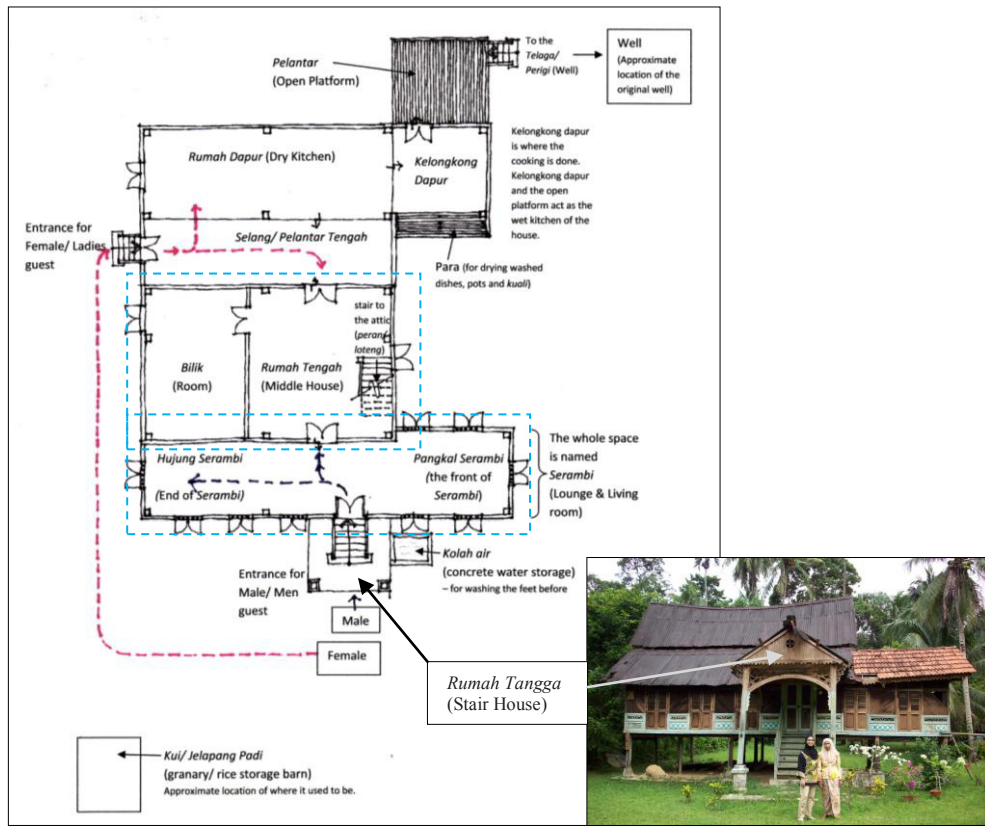


Fig. 10. (a) A typical layout of Negeri Sembilan traditional house typical layout (Taipot mother of Moyang Ijah's house in Kg. Penajah based on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> generation's description); (b) Photograph of the house's façade with present owner Esah (Uwan Itam) 4<sup>th</sup> generation of Taipot

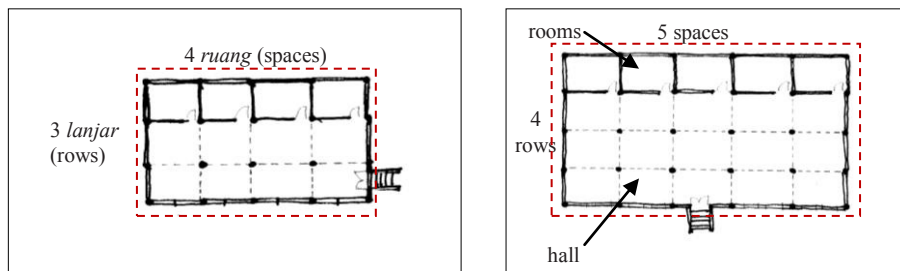


Fig. 11. (a) Minangkabau traditional house type B-C (20 columns with 3 rows and 4 space); (b) Minangkabau traditional house type K-P (30 columns with 4 rows and 5 spaces)  
(Source: Adapted from Idrus)

The K-P traditional house, the roof is just one, built in layers (*bumbung berlapis*) above of the whole interior space as in Figure 7(b). Interestingly illustrations by Waterson (2009), Aisyah Fajri et. al. (2009), and Idrus (1996) stated that type B-C is identified through the additional spaces on both sides with the floor stepped up towards both ends. Figure 12(a). Therefore in Figure 13, the researcher conclude, the

spaces within a larger C-B house type. The C-B house type, the roof for the added space on both ends are built separately attached to the gable-end of the main roof in a shape harmoniously built to make the whole composition appears layered.

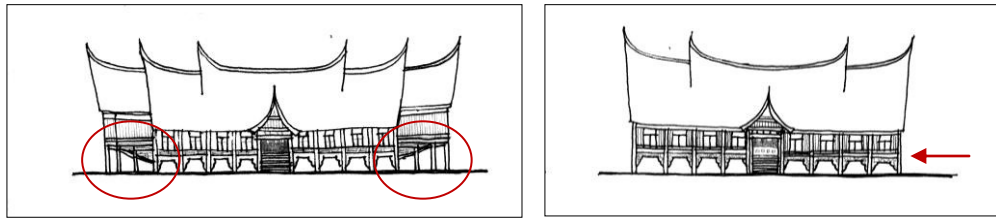


Fig. 12. (a) Type B-C with indicating the stepped spaces on both ends; (b) Type K-P where the floor is all at the same level

(Source: Adapted from Idrus)

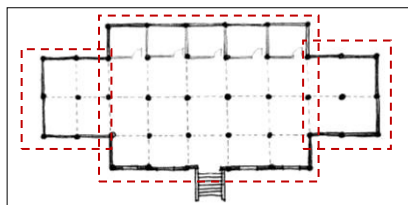


Fig. 13: Typical Minangkabau traditional house type C-B

In conclusion, the Minangkabau roof housed the whole of the interior spaces whereas otherwise for the Negeri Sembilan traditional house.

## 5. Survey Indication

A survey using questionnaires was executed to confirm the findings within an education institutional most related to the built environment. For this paper, analysis presented only those related to the paper's context. The respondents were asked to identify which of the sketches in Figure 14 (a), (b), (c) and (d) best shown the characteristics of Negeri Sembilan roof form. Next the respondents were asked to identify the visual representation of the *lentik* (upwards curve) shape of the Negeri Sembilan traditional house. The results obtained from 232 respondents are in Figure 15(a) and (b).

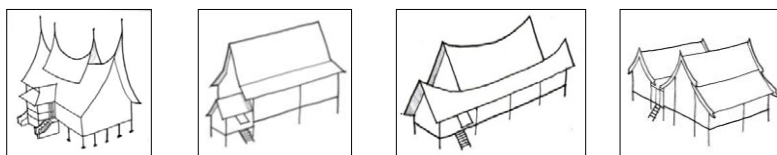


Fig. 14. (a) Minangkabau Traditional House, Western Sumatra; (b) Malay Traditional House in the Northern Region of Malaysia; (c) Negeri Sembilan Traditional House, Malaysia; (d) Malay Traditional House in the Eastern Region of Malaysia

(Source: Redrawn from Lim, 1987)



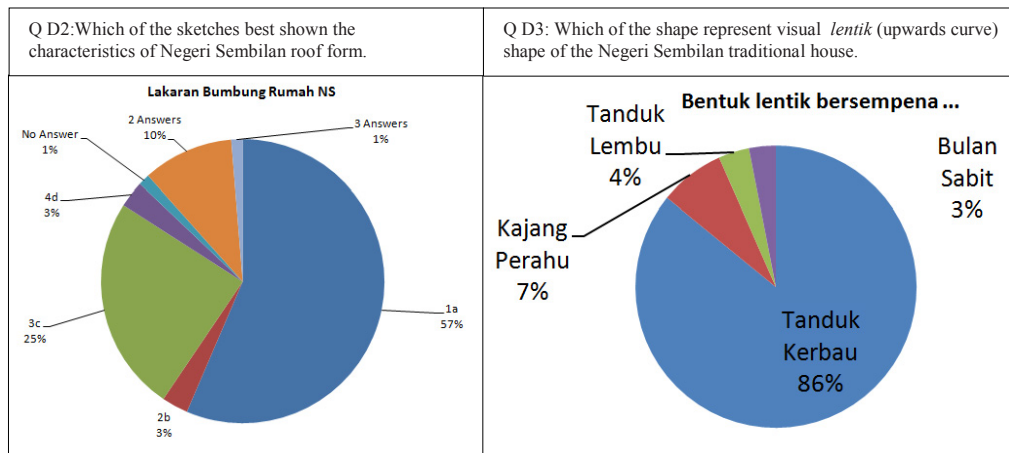


Fig.15. (a) Result of the survey on characteristics of the Negeri Sembilan roof form; (b) Result of the survey on the visual representation of the roof's upward curves

Figure 15(a) showed that 57% of the respondent chose Figure 14(a) to be the characteristic of the roof form of Negeri Sembilan traditional houses. As this paper was written with our future communities in mind, therefore the questionnaires analysis were refined in order to find out the result of respondents with the age of 30 years and below. 202 of 232 were below the age of 30 years old. It was found that 84.6 % of the 86% that answered *tanduk kerbau* (buffalo horns) as the visual representation of the *lentik* shape. A scarce of 7% answered *kajang perahu*, and a disturbingly 88.24% from that are below 30 years old. In the case of choosing the sketches best shown the characteristic of the Negeri Sembilan traditional house roof, 85.9% that answered 57% that answered Figure 14(a) were below 30 years old. The results of the survey were in accordance to findings of the literature reviews.

In addition to that respondents were asked answer whether the roof Negeri Sembilan traditional house are constructed *bertingkat* (levelled roof) or *berlapis* (layered). The results are shown in Figure 16(a) and (b) relatively. An alarming number of at least 33% of the respondents were unsure of the answer even when sketches as in Figure 9 were shown in the questionnaire. Due to such disturbing result of the survey the websites and blog were investigated to see the extent of misconceptions within the information shared.

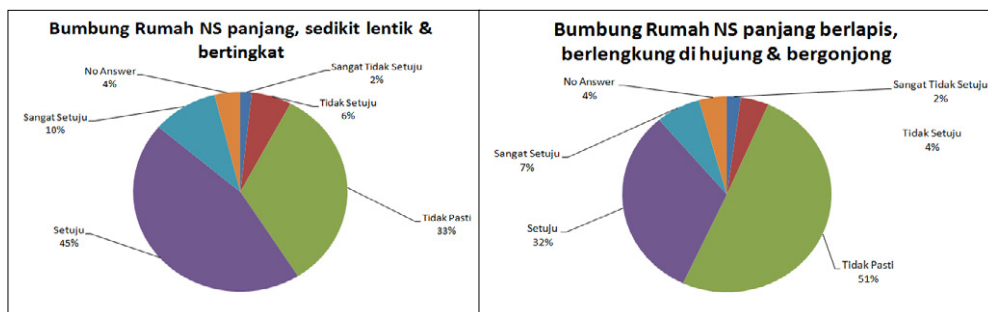


Fig. 16. (a) Result of the survey on characteristics of the Negeri Sembilan roof form; (b) Result of the survey on the visual representation of the roof's upward curves

## 6. Conclusion

The presented misconceptions are not meant to deny the presence of the Minangkabau origin within the communities but meant to enhance their unique existence that has evolved through time together with the Jakun communities. Although there were echoes of their origins within their architectural language but the integration of both cultures, evolved through time within the maritime cultures, became an outstanding creation independent of their ancestral traditional architectural language in Minangkabau.

The Negeri Sembilan traditional architecture is the manifestation of the unique hybrid of both cultures. That identity should be acknowledged in pride to the world. It is not wrong to copy the traditional architecture of Minangkabau and trying to preserve it in Malaysia, similarly to the Chinese copying their ancestral architectural language into their buildings. Nevertheless in the case of finding authenticity, the originality of the cultural significance is the major contributing factor.

In order to avoid future misconceptions, two considerations must be made. One to the hybrid families such as the Biduanda Jawa clans, who would like to brought forth to the world their unique culture although independent of Minangkabau but distinctly influenced by it. The other is to the pure descendants of the original Minangkabau clans who intended to preserve their ancestral identity as in Minangkabau. The author recommends that the traditional house to be termed as follows:

- The Negeri Sembilan Malay traditional house.
- The Negeri Sembilan Minangkabau traditional house.

Figure 17 (a), (b), (c), and (d) shows the Negeri Sembilan Malay Traditional Houses. Additional spaces on to the house front spaces reflect the status or rank of the owner within the communities.



Fig. 17. (a) A house in Kg. Pulau Hanyut, Rembau; (b) house in Kg. Pulau Hanyut with *pangkal serambi* added on one side with smaller photo showing the *pangkin* (seating platform in front of the front stair) at the *Rumah Tangga*; (c) a house in Kota town showing an *anjung* added at the front; (d) showing additional spaces to the *serambi* on both sides

(Source: Author, Masri)

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## Appendix A. Example of misconception in the blogs

As this paper's main concern is the future communities therefore the author will highlight one of the main communication medium of the present and definitely of our future communities, the websites, especially the blogs. Although blogs are not considered a valid reference for education but it is one of the most popular form of distributing and sharing information for the present younger generation. The research unravels that in many of personal blogs, a worrying trend, a habit of uploading schools assignments for 'Kajian tempatan: Year 4' subjects in their blogs for their friends' references. Refer also to Figure 18.

Reading their blog's contents regarding "Type of house in Malaysia: Traditional House", the seriousness of misconception among the school students is shocking. Such misconceptions at school levels are indicators of what future communities will believe regarding their local heritage and identity. Below are some examples of such misconceptions in the assignments in the blogs:



Fig. 18. (a) example 'Kajian Tempatan – Year 4' written assignment in the blogs; (b) another example of 'Kajian Tempatan – Year 4' written assignment in the blogs